

days, there is no legitimate reason we cannot meet that deadline.

Indeed, given the larger context in which we operate, I would submit that this Congress has a moral obligation to enact election reform before we adjourn:

Mr. Speaker, over the last year this country has committed vast resources to ridding the world of those who would employ the tools of terror to destroy systems of government that derive their legitimacy from the ballot box.

In just the past few weeks we in Congress have been challenged to contemplate the use of overwhelming military might to bring to heel one of the great despots of the past 50 years, a figure whose utter contempt for democracy and the people he rules is the only reason he has held power for so long.

As we consider such profound measures to extend democracy where it does not now exist and strengthen it where it is fragile, we have an urgent responsibility to do the same at home.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass this motion.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time, and I wish to thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), my friend, who has been steadfast in his support and building a rationale in this country for election reform. He did not need to be asked. He rose to the occasion. He worked extremely hard in this Congress. He held hands with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY). This has been a bipartisan push, and it has to happen.

It is very difficult for me to understand why it has not happened. The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) has laid out here a history of what has happened. I am a part of that history. I make history every day, and the people I represent make history because we are being misrepresented when the vote is not counted. We may go throughout the highways and byways of this country and get people to go to the polls and vote; but if their votes are not counted, it undermines a system which we are so proud of.

We are proud of this country. We know what it can do. We know what it has done. And we are saying over and over again we cannot accept the fact that many people, over 22,000 of them in Broward and Dade County, were overlooked, even more than that in Duvall County. The gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) has nightmares of what happened in Duvall County. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) and I have nightmares of what happened in Dade and Broward. But now it is beginning to happen to all citizens.

Not many people got alarmed when it happened to the people I represent. I came to this Congress, and I talked about it. I represent those people who are underrepresented. But now it is beginning to happen to the American populace. It happened when Janet Reno ran for Governor in Florida. People who wanted to vote for her could not. People who thought they had voted for her had not.

It is extremely important, Mr. Speaker; and I again appeal to this Congress, with the conscience I know my colleagues have, to stand up for America and see that the conferees get their work done, get it done immediately, and report it and the President pass it. Otherwise, the talking is cheap. Only their confidence, only their good will, only action will prove that every vote will count.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Motion to Instruct Conferees on H.R. 3295, introduced by the gentlewoman from Florida, Mrs. MEEK.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the Members of Conference Committee to convene a public meeting, finish their work on this legislation, and report it out.

It is time to have a final election reform bill on the floor of the House of Representatives. We've waited long enough.

For the past three weeks now, I have joined a number of Members at this podium and recounted how allegations of voter intimidation, inaccurate voter registration lists, arbitrary ballot counting standards and antiquated machinery deprived so many citizens of their right to vote during the 2000 election.

Just last week, we called for the House-Senate Conference Committee to complete their work by no later than October 1st.

Unfortunately, yet another week has come and gone, and still we have no election reform bill.

How can we go home to our Districts and look our constituents in the eye if we fail to enact legislation to protect this most sacred right, a right that is the cornerstone of our democracy?

Recent primary elections in Florida and elsewhere have only confirmed that the problems of the 2000 elections will still haunt us until we pass legislation to enact meaningful election reform standards. We in Congress have legislation almost within our grasp that will take giant strides to remedy the disenfranchisement of the last election.

We must pass this bill, and we must send it to the President for his signature before another day passes.

Now, it has taken a substantial amount of work to get us where we are today. I believe all Members of the Conference Committee deserve our gratitude for their work on this difficult issue.

I would also like to salute my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus for fighting to make "every vote count".

But while I recognize these individuals for their hard work, I want to remind all of them that our work will be for naught if we fail to pass this legislation.

In just 34 days, Americans across the country will go to the polls to cast ballots for their elected representatives.

Congress must act immediately to ensure that every American has the right to vote and to have their vote counted. Time is running out for the 107th Congress.

We've come so close to compromise, and the price for not passing election reform is far too high. It's time to quit wasting time.

I call on the Conference Committee finish its hard work, convene a public meeting, and

come to an agreement before October 4, 2002. We cannot afford to let this opportunity slip away.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Without objection, the previous question is ordered.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 37 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1406

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. QUINN) at 2 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will now put each question on which further proceedings were postponed earlier today in the following order:

H. Res. 543, de novo;

H. Res. 559, de novo;

Motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 3295, by the yeas and nays.

The Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the time for any electronic vote after the first such vote in this series.

SENSE OF HOUSE THAT CONGRESS SHOULD COMPLETE ACTION ON H.R. 4019, PERMANENT MARRIAGE PENALTY RELIEF ACT OF 2002

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question de novo on the resolution, House Resolution 543.